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STUDY

Journalism of "innocent fraud" :
The Great Decline of Legal Journalism in Bihar

DR. GOPAL KRISHNA

RESEARCH

Voices from the Periphery :
A Critical Synthesis of Scholarly Perspectives on Dalit Discourse, Marginality, and the Politics of History

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JUDGMENT

Meta Made Misleading and Deceptive Claims That its Platform was Safe : Meta pay $375 million for violating New Mexico law in a child exploitation case

ANALYSIS

Digital Imperialism and Emotional Tribute in East Asia

JIANLU BI AND TING ZHOU

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Dear Citizens,

The publication of Jan Media in Hindi and Mass Media in English started in April 2022. The Media Studies Group wants to continue publishing it regularly in the same way.

On this occasion, we would like to mention that without any financial support or donations from any institution or individual, the Media Studies Group keeps working hard to ensure the publication of every issue.

Both these journals were started with the aim of supporting the expansion of research culture in the field of communication in Indian society. There has been a lack of research culture in Hindi, although after the start of such publications, many universities have introduced courses and departments in journalism and mass communication. In English, the research situation seems comparatively better, but still not fully satisfactory. In Hindi, there is still a continuous shortage of research material. It was also decided that Jan Media and Mass Media would not be translations of each other. Both journals would have their own independent identity, although sometimes content from one may be translated into the other.

As the field of communication is expanding rapidly, the challenge of developing a strong research culture has also increased.

Jan Media and Mass Media are among the few journals in the country that are published regularly every month. The website of the Media Studies Group is also a useful platform.

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STUDY

PART 1 : JOURNALISM OF "INNOCENT FRAUD"

The Great Decline of Legal Journalism in Bihar

*Dr. Gopal Krishna**

I have learned that to be right and useful, one must accept a continuing divergence between approved belief - what I have elsewhere called conventional wisdom - and the reality. And in the end, not surprisingly, it is the reality that counts..... It is my conclusion that reality is more obscured by social or habitual preference and personal or group pecuniary advantage in economics and politics than in any other subject.

How can fraud be innocent? How can innocence be fraudulent? The answer is of no slight significance, for innocent, lawful fraud has an undoubted role in private life and public discourse. However, by neither those so believing nor those so guiding is there spoken recognition of that fact. There is, to emphasize, no sense of guilt or responsibility. Some of this fraud derives from traditional economics and its teaching and some from the ritual views of economic life. These can strongly support individual and group interest, particularly, as might be expected, that of the more fortunate, articulate and politically prominent in the larger community, and can achieve the respectability and authority of everyday knowledge. This is not the contrivance of any individual or group but represents the natural, even righteous view of what best serves personal or larger interest.

Most progenitors of what I hear intend to identify as innocent fraud are not deliberately in its service. They are unaware of how their views are shaped.

EXCERPTS FROM PROF. JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH'S *THE ECONOMICS OF INNOCENT FRAUD: TRUTH FOR OUR TIME* (2004)

"An advocate shall not be a full-time salaried employee of any person, government, firm, corporation or concern, so long as he continues to practise, and shall, on taking up any such employment, intimate the fact to the Bar Council on whose roll his name appears and shall thereupon cease to practise as an advocate so long as he continues in such employment. Nothing in this rule shall apply to a Law Officer of the Central Government of a State or of any Public Corporation or body constituted by statute who is entitled to be enrolled under the rules of his State Bar Council made under Section 28 (2) (d) read with Section 24 (1) (e) of the Act despite his being a full time salaried employee. Law Officer for the purpose of these Rules means a person who is so designated by the terms of his appointment and who, by the said terms, is required to act and/or plead in Courts on behalf of his employer."

RULE 49, BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA RULES UNDER ADVOCATES ACT, 1961 ON STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND ETIQUETTE

Conflict-of-interest ridden landscape of of legal journalism in the State is stinking because it has become rotten in its core with no possibility of sunlight disinfecting their incestuous relationship with the bar, executive, legislative and judicial institutions. Several factors have contributed to the erosion of journalistic ethics, including conflict-of-interest ridden assignments, sycophancy, financial pressures, naked affiliation with political parties and complicity with Jeffrey Edward Epstein like characters. Wittingly or unwittingly, such journalists have entered into a Faustian bargain and appear to be aligned with the Mephistopheles. Most of these journalists have not studied journalism and act in colossal ignorance of the ethics of journalism and the 5W and 1H framework of the elements of news data, comprising of Who? (character) What? (plot) When? (time) Where? (location) Why? (motivation or causation), How? (narrative). Journalists who practice journalism of "innocent fraud" cannot become worthy of emulation by young journalists. In order to hide the identity of the journalists, who also happen to be advocates, most of the news reports about courts are authored by anonymous, and non-transparent journalists. If their veils are pierced, the conflict-of-interest ridden clandestine operation and questionable journalistic practices will come to light. They seem to be mortally afraid of sunlight.

The Supreme Court in Dr. Haniraj L. Chulani vs. Bar Council of Maharashtra & Goa 1996 AIR 1708, in para 20 observed: "legal profession requires full time attention and would not countenance an Advocate riding two horses or more at a time." In complete disregard of the settled law, a large number of legal reporters in the State of Bihar are riding two horses by practicing as an advocates as well as journalists to win illegitimate favours from bar, executive, legislative and judicial institutions.

In Mohd. Kamran vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors. (2024), Supreme Court's Division Bench asked the State Bar Council as well as the Bar Council of India ascertain whether the rules of professional ethics permit a practicing Advocate to simultaneously work as a journalist. It issued noticde to notice to the Bar Council of India as well as Bar Council of State of Uttar Pradesh. In its order dated December 16, 2024, the Court passed an order which reads: We have perused the response of the Bar Council of India. The Bar Council, for the reasons stated, has taken a stand that it is not permissible for an Advocate to do full time journalism. Now, the petitioner has filed an affidavit dated 13th December, 2024 giving an undertaking in terms of paragraph 11 stating that the petitioner will not engage himself in the field of journalism either full time or part time and he will continue to practice as an Advocate. Today, learned counsel appearing for the petitioner in presence of the petitioner has accepted the correctness of the stand taken by the Bar Council of India." The counsel appearing behalf of the Bar Council of India (BCI) made it clear that such dual roles are not allowed. Referring to the conflicting roles of advocates and journalists, the BCI submitted: "Lordship, they cannot practice law while also being accredited journalists".

The case had arisen out of the judgment dated March 12, 2024 passed by the Allahabad High Court, which had arisen from summoning order dated order dated January 10, 2024 *by* Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate-III (MP/ MLA), Lucknow in Dr. Mohd. Kamran vs. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh (2024). *The* High Court had recorded in its order that the complainant was enrolled on the rolls of Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh and regularly appeared as an Advocate before the High Court as well as before the District and Sessions Court, Central Administrative Tribunal and was also a member of Oudh Bar Association, Lucknow. It was claimed that and in the light of Rule 51 of Bar Council of India, he was also having the status of a freelance journalist and was engaged in the profession for about 25 years. The High Court had set aside the summing order. Supreme Court did not find any ground to interfere with the order passed by the High Court. But recorded the submission of the BCI *which referred to Rule 49 of the BCI Rules, prohibiting advocates from taking full-time jobs with individuals, businesses, government agencies, or other entities. If an advocate becomes employed, they must inform the Bar Council and*

stop practicing law during their employment. The Supreme Court had asked "How can a member of the Bar claim to be both a journalist and an Advocate? This is highly unprofessional."

Disregarding the directions of the Court and the Rule 49 of the BCI, the advocates across the State of Bihar are practicing as legal reporters as well.

DECLINE IN COVERAGE OF COURTS, PAID NEWS, THREAT TO OPEN JUSTICE

A significant sections of the legal journalists in Bihar have willy-nilly become participants and players in questionable practices that contribute to the growing use of money power which undermines democratic processes and norms–while hypocritically feigning to occupy a high moral ground.

The 47th report on the "Issues Related to Paid News" by India's Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology reviewed the genesis of "Paid News", existing mechanism/guidelines/codes/norms/ organisations/legislations in this regard and measures required to tackle the malpractice. It recorded that a large number of journalists maintain deafening silence on this malpractice. Press Council of India (PCI) informed the Committee that over last six decades 'Paid News' have changed its form ranging from accepting gifts on various occasions, going on a sponsored tours, to other benefits and direct payment of money. The parliamentary report found that the decline in independence of the journalists/reporters was due to the emergence of contract system of employment as the system has the affect of reducing their status to mere marketing agents. The Committee felt perturbed at the pathetic working conditions of the significant part of the media personnel while strongly disapproving the tendency of the media houses to hire and fire the journalists. Among the legal journalists, it is increasingly apparent that they are dependent on undue favours from the bar, executive, legislative and judicial institutions to continue in their dual role as journalist and advocate although riding two horses is impermissible in law.

It germane to take note of the report of the Justice Select Committee of UK's parliament which has highlighted the impact of reduced court reporting on the public's understanding of how justice works, from understanding sentencing guidelines to the long-established and respected principle of open justice–'justice must be done, and seen to be done.' The committee has made a case for the 're-establishment of a courts' inspectorate' to help identify 'wider issues' within the justice system, ignored by journalists. The decline in coverage of courts has undermined democratic process. It has adverse impact on 'open justice'.

In Bihar, the legal journalists report only about few cases heard by few out of the 37 judges in Patna High Court. Their selection of news about ongoing court cases and final judgments and orders is arbitrary. In general, in most of the cases, these journalists either do not seem to have any news sense about why a particular case is news worthy or the newspaper editors do not provide them adequate space because justice related stories are not a priority or news worthy for them. The judgments and orders by most of the judges are not reported or not deemed news worthy for some inexplicable reason. They report only about the advocates and judges who are personally known to them. In general, they do not report when judgments and orders by single judges are either reversed or upheld by a 2-judge bench or by 3-judge full bench or when the High Court judgments are set aside or upheld by the Supreme Court. The UK's Justice Committee has observed: "the less aware the public is of the rule of law and the less informed they are as to whether the administration of justice is functioning as it should." This observation is relevant for court reporting in Bihar as well. Digital media has attempted to fill the gap in court reporting left by the decline by newspapers without success. The loss of public understanding of how justice is applied creates a rupture in citizens sense of reality.

A content analysis of judgments delivered by the High Court and its orders can provide a 'snapshots' of the deteriorating state of court reporting in Bihar. Take the case of the number of news reports about 254 judgments and 4012 orders by the 2-judge bench headed by outgoing Chief Justice of the High Court during his tenure during January 7, 2026-May 13, 2026. The news papers did not report about almost all of them. The content analysis will

*also reveal that the legal journalists do not report about Reportable Judgments by the High Court in diverse areas of law. They do not inform their readers about the rate of judgments delivered by each judge, t*he rate of judgments upheld by 2-judge bench and the Supreme Court and the rate of judgments and orders by the High Court which get appealed in the Supreme Court. They do not report about the number judgments and orders deemed news worthy in a year. The rigorous reporting of some of the judgments by digital legal journalists exposes the lackadaisical approach of legal journalists who do reporting for newspapers.

A careful scrutiny will reveal out of 254 judgments by the bench headed by outgoing Chief Justice of the High Court, only minuscule number cases were actually attended by journalists and very few were reported. A number of newspapers have not covered several benches of the High Court for several years. It is also a fact that the exorbitant costs of court transcripts is a barrier for undertaking rigorous reporting of the court proceedings. There is a compelling need to ensure that court transcripts and the full text of the petitions are more accessible to the journalists and the public because sunlight is the best disinfectant.

As per information available on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), as on March 25, 2026, the number of cases pending for more than 3 years in the lower courts of Bihar are 24,93,657, which are approximately 67% of the total pending cases in Bihar i.e. 37,11,288. Out of every 100 new cases, only 55 are being cleared.

As of May 15, 2026, there are 36 lakh pending cases in the courts in all the districts of Bihar. For example, in Patna and Bhojpur, 4,60,750 cases and 1,07,645 cases are waiting.

The pendency of cases in courts arose due to several factors besides availability of adequate number of judges and judicial officers. These factors include complexity of the facts involved, nature of evidence, co-operation of stakeholders, viz., bar, investigation agencies, witness and litigants, besides the availability of physical infrastructure, supporting court staff, etc. The legal journalists reporting for newspapers in Bihar have failed to report about these factors.

As per the information available on the Nyaya Vikas Portal 2.0, as on March 25, 2026, there were 364 vacant posts of judges in the subordinate courts of Bihar out of the total sanctioned strength of 2025 which is about 17.9% while at the national level 4,887 posts are vacant out of the total sanctioned strength of 25,902 posts which is 18.86%. In its 120th report (1987), the Law Commission of India recommended that the State should increase the present ratio from 10.5 Judges per million of Indian population to at least 50 Judges per million of Indian population. In Imtiyaz Ahmed vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors.(2012), the Supreme Court had asked the Law Commission of India to evolve a method for scientific assessment of the number of additional courts required to clear the backlog of cases. In 245th Report (2014), the Law Commission observed that filing of cases per capita varies substantially across geographical units as filings are associated with economic and social conditions of the population. As such the Law Commission did not consider the judge population ratio to be a scientific criterion for determining the adequacy of the judge strength in the country. The Law Commission found the "Rate of Disposal" method i.e. to calculate the number of additional judges required to clear the backlog of cases as well as to ensure that new backlog is not created to be more pragmatic and useful.

In August 2014, the Supreme Court asked the National Court Management System Committee (NCMS Committee) to examine the recommendations made by the Law Commission and to furnish its recommendations in this regard. NCMS Committee submitted its report to the Supreme Court in March, 2016. The report observed that in the long term, the judge strength of the subordinate courts will have to be assessed by a scientific method to determine the total number of "Judicial Hours" required for disposing of the case load of each court. In the interim, the Committee has proposed a "weighted" disposal approach i.e. disposal weighted by the nature and complexity of cases in local conditions.

As per the direction of the Supreme Court in its order dated January 2, 2017, the Department of Justice had forwarded a copy of interim report of the NCMS Committee to all the State Governments and High Courts to enable them to take follow up action to determine the required strength of district and subordinate judiciary. The judge-to-population ratio in the District and subordinate courts of Bihar is 19.45.

The Supreme Court by its order passed in Malik Mazhar Sultan (3) vs U.P. Public Service Commission & Ors. (2007) provided timelines, which was required to be followed by the States and the respective High Courts for recruitment of judges in District and Subordinate Courts but the same has not been adhered to in Bihar. Most legal journalists have remained silent about it.

COLOSSAL FAILURE: NON-REPORTING ABOUT DEFICIENCY IN JUDICIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The construction work of buildings for advocates in all 38 districts and 101 sub-divisions remains incomplete. They are crying for adequate budgetary allocation in each budget for repair of old buildings, construction of new buildings, provision of library, electronic equipment, separate toilets for male and female advocates, witnesses in all district civil courts and sub-divisional courts.

In Ramakant Sharma vs. The State of Bihar & Ors. (2026), High Court's Infrastructure Bench comprising Justices Rajeev Ranjan Prasad and Mohit Kumar Shah passed an order dated May 14, 2026, wherein it recorded that Thiyagarajan S.M., the District Magistrate, Patna informed the Court that for construction of lawyers' hall, digital computer room and toilet complex, a piece and parcel of land has been identified within the civil court premises at Barh. After joint inspection of the same by the officers of the Government and the Principal District Judge, Patna, the land has been found suitable. He has informed that no objection letter is to be received from the Principal District Judge, Patna, whereafter further progress shall be made. It has been further informed that for Patna City (Patna) also, a suitable piece of land has been identified and today itself, there will be a meeting with the Principal District Judge, Patna with whom after discussion, further steps shall be taken towards the construction of lawyers' hall and other related amenities." The Court's order reads:"We expect that the District Magistrate, Patna shall take keen interest in the matter and with his efforts, the construction work of lawyers' hall at Barh as well as Patna City should start at the earliest. All concerned stake holders, including the Secretary, Department of Building Construction, and the Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of Bihar must co-operate in the matter." The order also noted that out of ten districts it was examining, in nine districts the land for construction of lawyers' hall and related amenities are still not available. Regarding Gaya Ji, it was stated that a government land has been identified and a lay out plan has been demanded from the Chief Architect, Building Construction Department.

On May 15, 2026, the Court recorded that regarding construction of lawyers' hall and other amenities at Kahalgaon, Dr. Nawal Kishor Choudhary, the District Magistrate, Bhagalpur has assured the Court he will find out suitable piece of land in consultation with the Principal District Judge, Bhagalpur and other stakeholders. The Court directed the District Magistrate and the Principal District Judge, Bhagalpur to sit together with all the stakeholders, identify the land and send an appropriate proposal to the Law Department within one month from May 15 and let a report in this regard be submitted to this Court by June 22, 2026.

Sahila, the District Magistrate, Buxar informed the court that she has found a suitable place for construction of lawyers' hall and other amenities as required, in consultation with the Principal District Judge, Buxar. The proposal is yet to be sent to the Law Department. The Court's order reads: "We expect that the District Magistrate and the Principal District Judge, Buxar both shall sit together within a period of

one week from May 15, 2026 and take an appropriate decision with regard to the suitability of the land for construction of lawyers' hall and other amenities. A proposal in this regard be sent to the Law Department within one month from today. A report be submitted to this Court by 22nd June, 2026."

Navin Kumar, the District Magistrate, Khagaria informed the court that the lawyers' hall is to be constructed in place of the existing old lawyers' hall after demolition. Earlier, a proposal was sent but the Chief Architect, Building Construction Department was of the opinion that the land was not suitable but according to the District Magistrate, Khagaria, this land is very much suitable and he would send a fresh measurement of the land to the Executive Engineer, Khagaria Division. The High Court had also called upon the District Magistrate, Khagaria to discuss the matter with the local Bar Associations in presence of the Principal District Judge, Khagaria so that the old lawyers' hall may be demolished without any hindrance and construction of a new lawyers' hall with all amenities may proceed.

Ravi Parkash, the District Magistrate, Nawada informed that earlier correspondences were made with BSRTC and the Transport Department to make available some portion of the land belonging to BSRTC which is adjacent to the Civil Court Premises of Nawada but that could not bear fruit. The Court had requested the District Magistrate, Nawada to discuss the matter with the MD, BSRTC in this regard. If the land is lying idle and for last 3 years, no work has been done over that land by the BSRTC, the BSRTC may be requested to part with certain portion of the land in order to provide some expansion to the Civil Court Premises. The Court directed that let a comprehensive report in this regard be submitted to this Court after holding a discussion with MD, BSRTC within one month from May 15, 2026. In the meantime, the suitability of the land for the Civil Court Campus at Patna-Ranchi Road NH-20 be also considered and a decision may be taken in this regard by the stakeholders. A suitable decision be taken at the District Level Infrastructure Committee of the District Court, Nawada.

In Based on the order dated 21.08.2019 passed in Cr. Misc. 28530 of 2019 Bihar vs. The State of Bihar & Ors. (2026). the High Court's Infrastructure Bench comprising Justices Rajeev Ranjan Prasad and Mohit Kumar Shah passed a detailed order dated May 15, 2026 directing DMs and the concerned Secretaries of the State government to ensure construction of courts in the districts at the earliest after recording their submissions.

Tanai Sultania, District Magistrate, Bhojpur informed the Court that "presently no government land is available in the vicinity of the Civil Court, Ara for construction of Excise Court. The District Magistrate has assured this Court that a suitable piece of land measuring 10 acres has been identified for construction of a new civil court campus. A suitability report with regard to the said land has been provided. He has submitted that construction of civil court campus will take some substantial time. For the present, he proposes to construct Excise Court nearby the civil court campus, if required by acquiring private raiyati land or by taking a suitable building premises on hire basis." The order recorded that the District Magistrate, Bhojpur has assured the Court that he will advertise for expression of interest shortly within a week." Although more than one week has passed, the legal journalists of the newspapers are yet to report as to whether the promised expression of interest has been advertised.

Vinod Duhan, the District Magistrate, Araria informed the Court that for construction of Excise Court in Araria, "38 decimals of government land has been identified. A letter has been written to the Water Resources Department to give 'no objection' so that steps for transfer of the land in favour of the Court be taken. He has submitted that reminder has also been sent to the Water Resources Department in this regard." The Court directed the Secretary, Water Resources Department "to immediately take appropriate decision to issue 'no objection' for the

purpose of transfer of the land so that the construction of Excise Court may start in Araria. It is recorded only for understanding of the stake holders that it is an obligation of the State to provide Exclusive Excise Court as per the mandate under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016. Let such decision be taken within two weeks. On receipt of 'no objection certificate', further steps shall be taken to construct the court building."

So far the legal journalists not reported as to why Secretary, Water Resources Department has not issued 'no objection' for the purpose of transfer of the land so that the construction of Excise Court may start in Araria. Is it not dereliction of duty?

Abhilasha Sharma, the District Magistrate, Aurangabad informed the Court that "40 decimals of suitable land has been found for construction of Excise Court building within the premises of the Civil Court, Aurangabad. She has further informed this Court that by tomorrow, new proposal will be sent to the Law Department for further steps." The Court's order reads: "Let the proposal be sent to the Law Department to do the needful whereafter the Law Department shall process the file with all other stake holders and proceed towards construction of Excise Court building. Let a report in this regard be submitted to this Court by the Law Department before the next date of listing" on 25th of June, 2026.

Shrikant Shastree, the District Magistrate, Begusarai informed the Court that "search for suitable land for construction of premises is on and a committee has been constituted for this purpose and very soon a suitable piece of land for the civil court is likely to be identified. As regards, Excise Court building, he has informed that for the present, he is not able to trace the suitable piece of land as it is a township and there is dense population." The court recorded: "Perhaps suitable place is not available but the District Magistrate has assured that he will go for hiring a suitable building nearby the civil court premises for running the Excise Court. He prays for a month's time to go for advertisement etc. for hiring suitable building." The Court allowed one month to do that and directed that a report in this regard be submitted to this Court showing compliance after a month.

Taranjot Singh, the District Magistrate, Bettiah informed that "a suitable piece of land for construction of Excise Court building has been identified but the said land belongs to Bettiah Estate. To proceed further with the said land, he has to make certain compliances with the Rules for that purpose. He is preparing the proposal and the same will be sent to the Law Department." The Court recorded that "The Secretary, Law Department, Government of Bihar is present online. He has assured the Court to go through the entire matter and take suitable steps towards making the things clear for construction of Excise building at Bettiah." The Court directed that "a comprehensive report be filed before this Court within a month by the Law Secretary."

Dr. Nawal Kishor Choudhary, the District Magistrate, Bhagalpur informed the Court that "the work of Excise Court building is likely to be finished within a month. He has assured that when the building would be made functional, all encroachments in and around the campus shall be removed." The Court sought an updated report in this regard within six weeks from May 15, 2026.

Sahila, the District Magistrate, Buxar informed that construction work of the Excise Court is complete but to make it functional certain requirements like generator set, furniture and other amenities are required to be installed. She informed that sanction has been sought for in this regard from the Building Construction Department and the same is pending at the level of Chief Engineer of the Department. The Court's order recorded that Rajesh Kumar Singh, the Additional Secretary, Building Construction Department was present in the Court who has assured that "he would place the matter to the notice of the Chief Engineer and will get it done within a period of 15 days from today whereafter the same will be sent to the Law Department for sanction. He has assured that he will get the demand approved and the same will be sent to the Law Department for sanction." The Court directed the Chief Engineer of the Department to send the

approval immediately to the Law Department and the Law Department, in turn, will do the needful granting sanction at the earliest opportunity. We expect that Excise Court be made functional within a month from May 15, 2026.

Vaibhava Srivastava, the District Magistrate, Chapra informed that "a suitable piece of land for construction of the Excise Court has already been identified. The estimate is under preparation at the level of Building Construction Department." The Court's order recorded that the Additional Secretary, Building Construction Department submitted that within a week, estimates shall be prepared and the same shall be sent to the Law Department for administrative approval." The Court directed the Building Construction Department to prepare the estimate/proposal and send to the Law Department for administrative approval. The Law Department shall do the needful expeditiously and inform this Court within one month from May 15, 2026.

Pawan Kumar Sinha, the District Magistrate, Gopalganj informed that "a suitable piece of land has been identified for construction of Excise Court building and within 15 days from today, he will get all the formalities done at various levels and a proposal in this regard shall be sent to the Law Department." The Court directed that it should be done at the earliest. The Law Department shall take up this matter immediately after receipt of the proposal. Progress made in this regard be informed to this Court within a month.

Sanjay Kumar, A.D.M, Vaishali at Hajipur informed that "a suitable piece of land admeasuring 15 acres for construction of civil court campus at Hajipur has been identified. A proposal for acquisition of land is being prepared and the same will be sent to the Law Department within a period of 15 days" from May 15, 2026. The Court also informed that "for construction of Excise Court building also a suitable piece of land has been identified and a proposal in this regard is being sent to the Law Department within 15 days." The Court took the statement on record and directed that "On receipt of the proposal, the Law Department shall act suitably and will do the needful at the earliest opportunity. Compliance report be sent to this Court within three weeks."

Regarding Excise Court building at Jamui, the Additional Secretary, Building Construction Department informed the Court that even as the work order was issued on July 24, 2024, there was some delay in start of the work due to encroachment. Now, the work has started and it is likely to be finished by end of this year. The Court directed the Department to continue with the ongoing construction work and try to complete it as early as possible. Let a report in this regard be submitted to this Court with the progress made in the construction work after two months.

Alankrita Pandey, the District Magistrate, Jehanabad was directed to inform the Court as to when the Excise Court building is going to be handed over to the Court. If there is any requirement to make it functional, the same be brought to the notice of the Building Construction Department at the earliest and on receipt of such requirement the Building Construction Department will do the needful to facilitate the early opening of the Excise Court building. Compliance report be sent to this Court within a month.

Vishal Raj, the District Magistrate, Kishanganj informed that "a suitable piece of land for construction of Excise Court has already been identified. He has stated that a proposal has been sent to the Law Department in August, 2024." The Court directed that the Law Secretary, Government of Bihar should take note of it.

Anand Sharma, the District Magistrate, Madhubani has informed that "a suitable piece of land has been identified and a proposal in this regard has been sent to the Law Department today itself vide Memo No.1281 dated 15.05.2026. As soon as the Law Department grants its approval to the said piece of land, the matter shall be referred to the Building Construction Department for further action." The Court's order reads: "We call for an updated report from the Law Department and the Building Construction Department in this regard before the next date of listing" on June 25, 026.

Subrat Kumar Sen, the District Magistrate, Muzaffarpur informed that "at Muzaffarpur, no suitable piece of land has been made available for construction of Excise Court Building." The Court's order reads: "The District Magistrate, Muzaffarpur is directed to look into the matter and take expeditious steps in consultation with the Principal District Judge, Muzaffarpur to find out a suitable piece of land and inform this Court on the next date of listing. Information in this regard be sent to the District Magistrate, Muzaffarpur by the learned Standing Counsel-11 for the State."

Kundan Kumar, the District Magistrate, Nalanda informed that "18 acres of land has been identified for civil court campus in Biharsharif. The Excise Court will also come within the civil court campus." The District Magistrate, Nalanda agreed for the present that he will go for finding out a suitable building/accommodation from where Excise Court may be run. The Court's order reads: "We grant him a month's time to come out with advertisement for a suitable building on hire basis for running the Excise Court. Let a report in this regard be submitted by 22nd of June, 2026."

Ravi Parkash, the District Magistrate, Nawada informed that "a suitable piece of land has been identified and a proposal has already been sent to the Law Department in December, 2025. The Secretary, Law Department has informed this Court that the matter is presently pending at the end of the Principal District Judge, Nawada with regard to the suitability of the land." The Court directed the Principal District Judge, Nawada to take appropriate view of the matter and inform the Law Secretary preferably within a period of two weeks from may 15, 2026.

Udita Singh, the District Magistrate, Sasaram informed that "a suitable piece of land has been identified. The land belongs to the Water Resources Department, therefore she is making communication with that department for obtaining 'no objection'." The Court's order reads: "We expect that communication shall be made immediately without losing further time and the Water Resources Department shall issue 'no objection' for construction of the Excise Court at the earliest. A comprehensive report in this regard be submitted to this Court by 22nd June, 2026."

Pratibha Rani, the District Magistrate, Sheohar informed that "a suitable piece of land for construction of Excise Court building has been identified and proposal with regard to the same has been sent to the Law Department through the Principal District Judge, Sheohar." The Court directed the Secretary, Law Department to look into the matter and do the needful towards further progress of the construction of Excise Court at Sheohar. A comprehensive report be submitted in this regard to this Court by 22nd of June, 2026.

Vivek Ranjan Maitrey, the District Magistrate, Siwan informed that "about 35 acres of land has been identified for construction of civil court campus and proposal for acquisition of land has been sent to the Law Department on 10th April, 2026." The Court directed that the Law Department should do the needful and expedite the process for acquisition. So far as Excise Court building is concerned, it has been agreed in course of interaction that the District Magistrate, Siwan shall go for hiring a suitable building/accommodation from where Excise Court may be run. For this purpose, he will come up with expression of interest at the earliest opportunity. We call for a report in this regard by 22nd of June, 2026.

Shekhar Anand, the District Magistrate, Sheikhpura informed that "construction work of Excise Court is going on. The work could start with some delay only because work order was issued by the Building Construction Department recently in the year 2026." He has informed that the building would be completed by February, 2027. The Court directed "the District Magistrate, Sheikhpura and the Secretary, Building Construction Department to ensure completion of the building at the earliest preferably by the end of this year. There is already significant delay in start of the work. An updated report showing progress in construction be submitted to this Court by 27th July, 2026.

The Court also directed the Registrar General, Patna High Court "to call for a report from all the Principal District Judges of the Districts across the State with regard to the updated position of the construction of the Excise Court building and submit a report to this Court.

The legal journalists of state failed to seize the opportunity of reporting the state of infrastructural deficiency in almost all the districts of Bihar. The editors of these newspaper ought to seek a written explanation for such glaring failure on the part of the legal reporters who cover High Court. The submission of DMs in the Court and the coincidence use of similar language "land has been identified for construction of civil court" by most of the DMs is curious and remains newsworthy.

These glaring facts and data make the situation ripe for rigorous reporting of courts but legal journalists of the newspapers have failed to sense news in the dire situation about lack of human power and infrastructure for judges, advocates and litigants. Constitution of India promises "complete justice" to citizens but paucity of basic judicial infrastructure and human power delivers incomplete justice.

MADE-TO-ORDER NEWS

Financial constraints have led to practices such as "chequebook journalism," where some journalists accept payments for stories, *quid pro quo* assignments and gifts compromising objectivity. "Brown envelope journalism" is prevalent, with some reporters allegedly accepting cash due to low salaries, undermining the credibility of an independent press. The brown envelope is non-transparent. They are practicing embedded journalism.

By now it has emerged that "Paid News" is not about corruption of individual rogue journalists, it is about internalizing the abnormal as normal, immoral as moral and decline in journalistic practice as natural and innocent. Most legal journalists in Bihar do not report adequately about it due myriad constraints.

In Dr. Ranganathan Rajya Pustakalaya Samiti & Anr. vs. The State of Bihar & Ors. (2026), Patna High Court's Division Bench of Chief Justice Sahoo and Justice Harish Kumar delivered an elaborate order on May 15, 2026, wherein, it concluded:"In the eyes of the law, a vacant librarian post, especially in a University is not merely an administrative oversight; it is seen as a functional breakdown in the "administration of justice" and the "academic health" of an institution. The vacancy of a librarian is not an administrative choice but a failure of the State's duty to provide the necessary infrastructure for education and justice. In the absence of a Librarian, physical collection of books deteriorate without proper preservation protocols, reference services remain absent, institutional subscriptions to journals and databases are not procured, managed, or optimised, and no systematic weeding or collection takes place.. The order was authored by the outgoing chief justice who is retiring on June 4, 2026. The case will now be heard by the next chief justice. The High Court's order dated March 25, 2026 revealed that the post of 289 librarian in various higher educational institutions in the State of Bihar have remained unfilled since 1990. .A copy of the datasheet was furnished to P.K Shahi the Advocate General, who sought some time to obtain instruction. Advocate General sought adjournment on April 30, 2026 and prayed for a short adjournment on May 6, 2026 to ensure filing of a supplementary counter affidavit bringing on record necessary facts. The case was filed on December 17, 2020 and registered on January 23, 2021. Significantly, five chief justices, namely, Justices Sanjay Karol, K. Vinod Chandran, Vipul Manubhai Pancholi, P.B. Bajanthri and now Sahoo heard the case since June 2021 but the posts of the librarians have not been filled up. Almost all the legal journalists failed to report about it.

It is evident that advocates are not trained to be journalists. They suffer from poverty of journalistic imagination. It is high time they desist from riding two horses and doing great disservice to both the professions and to the cause of journalism and justice.

(The author is a practicing advocate and a researcher of philosophy, mass communication and law.)

RESEARCH

VOICES FROM THE PERIPHERY

A Critical Synthesis of Scholarly Perspectives on Dalit Discourse, Marginality, and the Politics of History

*Rahul Ranjan**

ABSTRACT

This article synthesizes the theoretical and methodological contributions of major scholars engaged with questions of caste, marginality, and Dalit discourse in the Indian context. Drawing on historiographical, literary, sociological, and political frameworks, the article examines how these thinkers collectively challenge elite-centered narratives and advance a more inclusive, critically grounded understanding of Indian society. The discussion is organized thematically, moving from historical methodology through social stratification to literary aesthetics and the politics of language.

Keywords - silenced voice, dalit politics, identity, literature, history-writing

HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY AND THE CRITIQUE OF BRAHMINICAL EXPLANATION

Any serious engagement with the question of caste in Indian history must begin with the foundational critique mounted by B.R. Ambedkar, whose work permanently altered the terms of the debate. Ambedkar rejected what he called Brahminical explanations of caste as divinely ordained, insisting instead on what he described as a "natural explanation of a social fact" — that social divisions are products of human behavior and historically contingent circumstances, not metaphysical necessity (as cited in course materials). His reconstruction of early Indian history traced the origins of the Dalit condition to the Aryan conquest of the indigenous Dasas and Dasyus, arguing that the victors imposed a system of enslavement that hardened over centuries into the hereditary institution of untouchability. What is

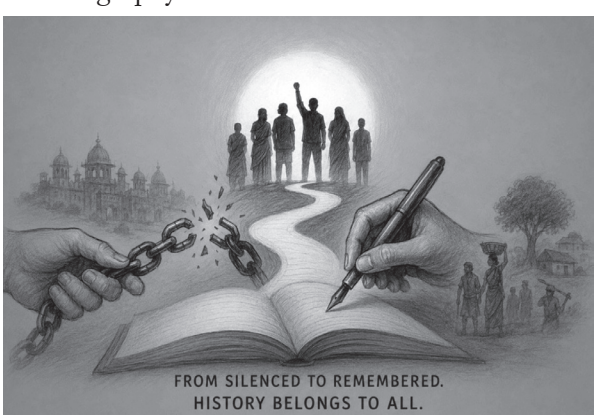
methodologically significant about Ambedkar's contribution is not simply the content of his argument but its form: he insisted on a realist and rational historiography that located motives, interests, and power in historical events rather than retreating to transcendental or religious explanations.

This insistence on locating material causes within historical processes was shared, in a different register, by Ram Sharan Sharma, whose use of ancient textual sources such as Kautilya's *Arthashastra* allowed him to reconstruct the lived conditions of lower-caste communities in antiquity. Sharma's analysis demonstrated that the roles of lower-caste women, in particular, were more dynamic than elite texts acknowledged, precisely because their participation in productive labor gave them a footprint in social and economic life that purely ritual frameworks could not capture. For Sharma, profession and productive work — not birth alone — shaped social mobility and hierarchy in ancient India, a finding that complicated the static picture of caste that dominant historiography had long preferred.

MEDIEVAL TRANSITIONS: STRATIFICATION, DECLINE, AND NEW FORMS OF OPPRESSION

The post-Gupta period represents a critical turning point in the history of caste, one that Amar Farooqui examined through the lens of structural economic change. The decline of urban centers, the rise of landlordism, and the proliferation of jatis during this era, Farooqui argued, effectively drained the varna system of its functional significance while simultaneously generating new and more localized forms of social stratification and oppression. What had been, at least in theory, a fourfold division of social function became a far more fragmented and hierarchically dense arrangement of communities, each bound to particular occupations, localities, and ritual standings.

Irfan Habib approached the pre-Mughal and Mughal periods through the lens of material culture and technological exchange, drawing attention to the interactions between indigenous Indian and immigrant artisan communities. For Habib, these encounters were not merely economic events; they fostered mobility, redefined social identities, and created spaces in which existing hierarchies could be, at least partially, renegotiated. Satish Chandra extended this attention to artisanal life into the medieval period more broadly, arguing that technological innovation and economic transformation generated new social relations and gave rise to emergent rural classes whose existence mainstream historiography had tended to overlook.



PHULE, OMVEDT, AND THE POLITICS OF INTERSECTIONALITY

No account of the intellectual history of Dalit politics is complete without engaging with Jotiba Phule, whose nineteenth-century activism established frameworks that later thinkers would develop and extend. As interpreted by scholars including G.P. Deshpande and Gail Omvedt, Phule was remarkable for addressing caste and gender simultaneously, at a moment when most reform movements treated these as separate and

often competing concerns. His insistence on equal rights across both axes of discrimination made him a pioneer of what contemporary scholarship calls intersectional analysis.

Gail Omvedt built on this inheritance in her own theoretical work, arguing that Dalit thought derives its distinctive character from its rootedness in real-life situations and collective action rather than in abstract doctrine. "The logic of Dalit politics," Omvedt (2010) argued, demands unity not merely among Dalit communities but across all oppressed groups, since the challenge to Brahminical hegemony and religious fundamentalism cannot be mounted from within a single constituency (p. 183). Omvedt's insistence on a synthesis of economic, political, and cultural challenges resists the reductionism that treats caste oppression as either purely material or purely ideological — it is, she demonstrated, irreducibly both.

LITERATURE AS LIVED EXPERIENCE: KASBE, LIMBALE, AND DALIT AESTHETICS

One of the most consequential debates within Dalit studies concerns the relationship between literature and life — or more precisely, the question of whether literature produced from within conditions of extreme oppression can or should be evaluated by the same aesthetic criteria applied to mainstream literary production. Raosaheb Kasbe addressed this directly, arguing that Dalit literature is not a distinct genre in the conventional sense but rather a reflection of the lived experiences of millions across centuries of marginalization. "Literature and life are integrally related," Kasbe (2009) observed, insisting that criticism of Dalit writing must emerge from an understanding of the creative act itself and the social conditions that generate it (p. 297). For Kasbe, Dalit writers are not simply literary figures; they are agents of political and social change, and their writing must be read with that agency in mind.

Kasbe also extended his analysis beyond the Indian context, drawing parallels between Dalit and Black American experiences of suffering and resistance. The distinction he drew was pointed: while Black American suffering in the United States was rooted in racial difference constructed through colonial slavery, Dalit suffering was, in his formulation, man-made in a more historically specific sense — the product of deliberate social engineering susceptible to political remedy through organized collective action.

Sharan Kumar Limbale pushed this argument further into the terrain of aesthetics. Limbale maintained that Dalit writers do not and cannot share the priorities of mainstream literary culture, whose concern with aesthetic refinement, formal elegance, and entertainment is a luxury unavailable to those whose primary obligation is to bear witness. Traditional aesthetic values, he argued, are simply not applicable to Dalit literature, which demands "a separate aesthetics based on real experiences" (as cited in course materials). The social problem is not the backdrop of Dalit writing; it is its very substance.

R.G. Jadhav offered a complementary perspective, arguing that the distinctiveness of Dalit literature lies precisely in its capacity to hold social awareness and aesthetic form together without subordinating one to the other. "Dalit feelings and aesthetic detachment" — the title of his contribution to Arjun Dangle's landmark anthology — captures the tension that Dalit writing must navigate: the imperative to convey the full weight of suffering without becoming merely documentary, to achieve art without abandoning testimony (Jadhav, 2009).

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, COLLECTIVE MEMORY, AND ANTI-GENEALOGY

The Dalit autobiographical tradition has attracted significant scholarly attention, not least

because it departs so markedly from the conventions of the genre as inherited from both Western and upper-caste Indian literary practice. Mini Babu observed that Dalit autobiographies are characteristically written at an earlier age than those of upper-caste authors and focus not on individual achievement or spiritual development but on collective suffering and the community's ongoing struggle. The "I" of the Dalit autobiographer is insistently communal; individual experience is offered as evidence of a shared condition, making these texts historical documents as much as personal ones.

Toral Jatin Gajarawala approached Dalit literature from a theoretical angle, arguing that it functions as an "anti-genealogy" — a body of writing that defines itself through its critical engagement with, and refusal of, upper-caste literary forms and their underlying assumptions. To read Dalit literature properly, Gajarawala suggested, is to read it against the mainstream canon, attending to its cultural refusals and oppositional parameters rather than measuring it against criteria that were never designed with it in mind.

LANGUAGE, PROTEST, AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF ATROCITY

The political dimensions of language in Dalit discourse received sustained attention from several scholars. Ravikumar, in his volume *Venomous Touch*, argued that language functions as a primary instrument of protest for marginalized communities, enabling them to contest dominant ideas and dismantle stereotypes through the act of naming what dominant culture prefers to leave unnamed. "The autobiographical impulse," for Ravikumar (2007), is inseparable from this project of constructing new narratives that refuse the terms imposed by the powerful.

Javed Ahmad Lone's analysis of Meena Kandasamy's poetry illuminated one particular dimension of this linguistic politics: Kandasamy's deliberate adoption of African-American vocabulary and her deployment of direct, at times deliberately harsh language to expose social hypocrisy and violence. For Lone, this linguistic strategy is not simply stylistic; it is a claim to solidarity across geographically and culturally distinct experiences of racialized and caste-based oppression.

Shiv Visvanathan, drawing on Prakash Louis, foregrounded what he called the "sociology of atrocities" as central to any adequate account of Dalit experience. Atrocity, in this framework, is not an exceptional event but a constitutive social fact — a routine dimension of the enforcement of caste hierarchy whose systematic character requires sociological rather than merely criminological analysis. The collective erasure of Dalit identity through violence and humiliation is, on this account, the very mechanism by which the caste order reproduces itself.

Raj Kumar, whose work on Dalit personal narratives examined the intersections of caste, nation, and identity, emphasized that consciousness-building is prior to political action: protest and assertion arise from awareness of social prejudice, and it is through literature and education that such awareness spreads (Kumar, 2010). Kumar also drew attention to the role of the educated Dalit middle class in advancing both literary production and political consciousness — a role that is, as he noted, not without its own tensions and contradictions (Kumar, 2007).

DISCOURSE, CULTURE, AND THE QUESTION OF METHOD

Vrushali Nagarale, drawing on Gabriele Griffin's work, offered a methodological clarification that has practical implications for the study of Dalit texts: the distinction between discourse analysis and textual analysis. Where

textual analysis attends to the internal features of a written work, discourse analysis examines how language operates within and across communicative events, transmitting power relations and making possible — or foreclosing — the expression of particular feelings and identities. This distinction matters for Dalit studies because many of the most important texts in the tradition operate simultaneously as literary objects and as discursive acts embedded in specific social and political contexts.

Raymond Williams, whose influence on cultural studies extended well beyond the Western academy, defined culture as "a wide movement in thought and feeling — a whole way of life" (as cited in course materials). This expansive definition, which refuses to confine culture to its elite or institutionally sanctioned forms, offers a useful frame for approaching the cultural production of marginalized communities: Dalit literature, oral traditions, ritual practices, and forms of collective memory are all, on Williams's account, legitimate objects of cultural analysis with their own coherence and significance.

CONCLUSION

The scholars surveyed in this article represent divergent disciplinary orientations and methodological commitments, yet they are united by a common recognition: that an honest account of Indian society and history requires the systematic inclusion of those whom dominant narratives have consistently rendered invisible. From Ambedkar's rational historiography to Limbale's call for a separate Dalit aesthetics, from Omvedt's insistence on cross-caste solidarity to Kasbe's vision of the writer as political agent, these thinkers have collectively constructed a body of thought that is at once critical, activist, and intellectually rigorous. The study of margins is not, in the end, a supplement to mainstream scholarship. It is a correction of it — and, ultimately, its necessary foundation.

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META MADE MISLEADING AND DECEPTIVE CLAIMS THAT ITS PLATFORM WAS SAFE

Meta pay $375 million for violating New Mexico law in a child exploitation case

(This is part of the writ filed before ***first judicial district court county of santa fe state of new mexico. This*** *complaints made in May 2023 for abatement and civil penalties and demand for jury trial. A note had been put on the first page of the writ in 228 pages that this complaint, especially at pages 25-85 contains redacted images of child sexual exploitation and other sexually explicit images, as well as images of self harm, which may be disturbing.*

On this writ a jury ruled in the last week of month March 2026 that Meta must pay $375 million for violating New Mexico law in a child exploitation case. following a jury's decision to hold the company liable for failing to safeguard children on its platforms, Attorney General Raúl Torrez told CNBC that "We're going to be asking for injunctive relief," Torrez said on CNBC's "Squawk Box" about the next phase of the trial to address the state's public nuisance claim.

"That means changes to the design features of the platform itself, real age verification, changes to the algorithm, an independent monitor to oversee those changes and fundamentally a demand that they do business differently in New Mexico," The state's lawyers alleged that Meta misled residents about the safety of its apps with respect to child sexploitation and related harms.)

As Bejar made clear in his Congressional testimony, "Meta continues to publicly misrepresent the level and frequency of harm that users, especially children, experience on the platform." These misrepresentations were designed to increase usage of Meta's platforms by assuring teens and their parents that its platforms were safe and appropriate for children, and failed to disclose the evidence of serious harms that it knew its young users suffered. Each of these statements and omissions painted a misleading and untrue picture of the safety of its platforms and sought to minimize or misstate the volume of objectionable content and dangerous activity on Meta's platforms.

JUDGMENT

Meta and its executives repeatedly made statements intended to reassure users, advertisers paying to reach those users, and parents that its platforms are safe and that illegal content on Meta's platforms is minimal, or, if it does exist, is subject to prompt and effective action by Meta's personnel and automated detection systems, including the following:

a. In 2012, a Facebook spokesperson told the Associated Press that Meta "take[s] human trafficking very seriously and a number of measures are in place to counter this activity."

b. Eva Chen, a Meta employee responsible for fashion partnerships, was reported as stating at a CornellTech event in the Spring of 2018 that "[m]aking the community a safer place, a place where people feel good, is a huge priority for Instagram . . . I would say one of the top priorities."[1]

c. In a June 2019 interview with CBS News, Instagram head Adam Mosseri stated: "We've been focused on well being broadly, like I said, it's our number one priority" and "[w]e will do things that mean people use Instagram less if we think that they keep people safe or generally create a healthier environment."[2]

d. On a public earnings call on January 29, 2020, Meta's then Chief Operating Officer, Sheryl Sandberg, stated: "While we continue to invest in helping businesses, we are equally focused on keeping our platform safe."

e. In an April 2020 public SEC filing, Meta claimed: "We use sophisticated technology and other techniques not only to detect child exploitation imagery and remove it, but also to detect and prevent grooming or potentially inappropriate interactions between a minor and an adult." Meta further stated: "We deploy technology across all of our platforms to proactively surface as much illegal child exploitative content as we can, including through detection technology, machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques, and open sourcing photo- and video-matching technology."[3]

f. In May 2021, Mosseri told reporters that Instagram's effects on the wellbeing of teenagers and adolescents was "quite small," according to a September 2021 report in the Wall Street Journal.[4]

g. In June 2021, Meta issued a statement to CBS News calculated to portray Meta's platforms as safe and to convince uses and potential users that Meta actively and effectively polices activity on its Facebook platform: Sex trafficking and child exploitation are abhorrent and we don't allow them on Facebook. We have policies and technology to prevent these types of abuses and take down any content that violates our rules. We also work with safety groups, anti-trafficking organizations and other technology companies to address this and we report all apparent instances of child sexual exploitation to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

h. On October 5, 2021, Meta Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg published a public Facebook post that claimed: "We care deeply about issues like safety, well-being and mental health. It's difficult to see coverage that misrepresents our work and our motives." Zuckerberg continued: "At the heart of these accusations is this idea that we prioritize profit over safety and wellbeing. That's just not true." He claimed that "it's very important to me that everything we build is safe and good for kids."[5]

i. Instagram's website contains a blog postdated December 7, 2021 attributed to Mosseri entitled "Raising the Standard

for Protecting Teens and Supporting Parents Online." That post begins with the following statement: "At Instagram, we've been working for a long time to keep young people safe on the app."[6] Another blog post from December 15, 2022 is entitled "Continuing to Keep Instagram Safe and Secure,"[7] which is intended to deemphasize the prevalence of inappropriate and illicit content and contacts that teens and adolescents face on a near-daily basis.

j. Responding to an article in the Guardian, "How Facebook and Instagram became marketplaces for child sex trafficking," which was published in 2023, a Meta spokesperson promised: "The exploitation of children is a horrific crime – we don't allow it and we work aggressively to fight it on and off our platforms."[8]

Meta's Community Standards for Facebook declare: "We do not allow content or activity that sexually exploits or endangers children"[9] including child nudity, and, with respect to suicide/self-harm content proclaim: "We remove any content that encourages suicide or self injury, including fictional content such as memes or illustrations and any self-injury content whichis graphic, regardless of context."[10] Its Instagram Community Guidelines similarly claim: "We have zero tolerance when it comes to sharing sexual content involving minors or threatening to pose intimate images of others."[11] Meta's Transparency Center promises that the company (in relevant part) "remove[s] content that facilitates or coordinates . . . human trafficking", including "in order to force them to engage in commercial sex . . ." through "deception, force and coercion."

However, as described above, such content is readily available on Facebook and Instagram and efforts to remove it are often rejected or unsuccessful.

Meta's published "Community Standards" also proclaim that Meta "take[s] our role seriously in keeping abuse off the service." But this statement cannot be squared with the numerous reports above of Meta failing to detect or address a huge volume of sexualized content, allowing children to access it, or designing its algorithms to recommend it and network it through a web of predators. Meta claims that such illicit or unlawful content is infrequent and is allowed to remain only after the company determines that its value outweighs its harm: "In some cases, we allow content—which would otherwise go against our standards—if it's newsworthy and in the public interest. We do this only after weighing the public interest value against the risk of harm, and we look to international human rights standards to make these judgments."[12]

Meta's efforts to publicly portray its platforms as safe and largely free of illicit content extends to quarterly Community Standards Enforcement Reports ("CSER") which "provide metrics on how we enforced our policies . . . and estimates on the amount of violating content (Prevalence) on Facebook and Instagram." Meta's May 15, 2018 press release announcing the formation of these reports made clear that the reports were and are intended to allow the public to see "how much bad stuff is out there," and thereby permit the public to "judge our performance for yourself." Meta positioned itself as a company invested in eliminating illicit content from its platforms: "We believe that increased transparency tends to lead to increased accountability and responsibility over time, and publishing this information will push us to improve more quickly too. This is the same data we use to measure our progress internally – and you can now see it to judge our progress for yourselves."

Each and every one of these reports underreport the existence of objectionable or violative conduct on Facebook or Instagram because they all rely on Meta's flawed "prevalence" standard. A May 23, 2019 blog post described "prevalence" as "[o]ne of the most significant metrics we provide in the Community Standards Enforcement Report." Meta reported that "we

consider prevalence to be a critical metric because it helps us measure how violations impact people on Facebook. We care most about how often content that violates our standards is actually seen relative to the total amount of times any content is seen on Facebook." It compared this metric to "measuring concentration of pollutants in the air we breathe" and claimed that "[p]revalence is the internet's equivalent – a measurement of what percent of times someone sees something that is harmful."[13]

Meta's CSERs consistently reported low prevalence of human trafficking, CSAM, bullying and other problematic materials. For example: (**000**)*[14]

Individually and collectively, each of these reports conveyed the impression that Meta aggressively enforced its Community Standards on both Facebook and Instagram, and that its efforts were succeeding in keeping the platforms relatively free of harmful content **000** Meta's most recent report (released in August 2023) claims that the purpose of the report is to "demonstrate our continued commitment to making Facebook and Instagram safe and inclusive."

Nowhere do the CSERs explain how much sexualized content remains on the platforms and accessible to children; the ability of adult strangers to identify, groom, and seek sexualized content and activity from children; or the widespread sale of CSAM, among other commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Moreover, as explained above, the prevalence metric consistently underestimated the amount of problematic and illicit content displayed on Facebook. The prevalence metric contradicted the findings of Meta's own BEEF study, which showed **000**

The chart below demonstrates the discrepancies between the BEEF study (reported instances only over the prior 7 days) and the corresponding Community Standards Enforcement Report (which reports "prevalence" over a longer period of time): **000**[15]

Meta not only made affirmative misrepresentations, it also made material omissions in its public statements. For example, a June 8, 2021 blog post entitled "Shedding More Light on How Instagram Works" represented that Instagram employed "algorithms, classifiers, and processes" in order "to personalize your experience" to prioritize "what you care about most."[16]

But that post did not disclose that those recommendations could, and often did, include recurring posts containing illegal or harmful content, like that uncovered by the State's investigation. Nor did it disclose the existence of "rabbit holes," "vortices" or "flywheels," well-known to Meta, that resulted from the algorithms design and operation. Further, an article in Instagram's "Help Center" section represents that Instagram "avoid[s] making recommendations that may be inappropriate for younger viewers."[17]

Many of Meta's other public statements materially omitted facts known to Meta regarding the true nature of its platforms. While portraying its platforms as "safe," Meta failed to disclose the internal studies in its possession—including the numerous internal studies cited above—identifying and quantifying the harm associated with using its platform, including studies related to self-image of teens and adolescents, studies related to causing anxiety and depression among teens and adolescents, and studies related to eating disorders and the prevalence of material related to eating disorders on Meta's platforms.

Even though, as described above, Meta's algorithms utilize artificial intelligence in order to "recommend" content or connections to users—including illicit and harmful content— Meta makes benign claims in documents such as its Instagram Privacy Policy that the data it uses the data it collects "[t]o promote safety, security and integrity," "[t]o research and innovate for social good," or "[t]o provide measurement, analytics and business services" for individuals who "rely on our Products to run or promote their businesses."17 In reality, Meta does not use its algorithms to identify illicit content.

If it did, the results of the Attorney General's investigation likely would not have occurred.

Further, Meta to this day continues to report its "prevalence" metric without disclosing the BEEF survey demonstrating the statistic materially misrepresented users' experiences on its platforms.

All of these misrepresentations and omissions were made for purposes of pursuing profits over safety, and at the expense of teen and adolescent users of its platforms who suffered real and lasting harm due to Meta's design and business choices.

*** 000 means that the sentences even one citation in the writ has been coloured by black.**

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*Arturo Bejar initially worked in "Facebook's Protect & Care group" until 2015, and when he left Facebook, he "felt good that we had built numerous systems that made using our products easier and safer." Bejar returned as a consultant to Meta in 2019 to address the "distressing experiences" faced by many teens he knew of. He discovered that his prior work from just fou years earlier had been largely dismantled: It was not a good experience. Almost all of the work that I and my colleagues had done during my earlier stint at Facebook through 2015 was gone. The tools we had built for teenagers to get support when they were getting bullied or harassed were no longer available to them. People at the company had little or no memory of the lessons we had learned earlier. Meta had effectively abandoned his prior work for the sake of pursuing greater teenage audiences, which in turn led to greater profit. As Bejar noted in his written Congressional testimony, "Meta's current approach to these issues only addresses a fraction of a percent of the harm people experience on the platform. In recent years, repeated examples of harm that has been enabled by Meta and other companies has come to light, through whistleblowing, outside research studies, and many stories of distressing experiences people have there . . . [T]here is a material gap between their narrow definition of prevalence and the actual distressing experiences that are enabled by Meta's products."

Bejar laid the blame squarely on Meta and its decision-makers, including Zuckerberg: "[M]anagers including CEO Mark Zuckerberg do not seem to seek to understand or actually address the harms being discussed. Instead, they minimize or downplay published findings, and even sometimes the results of their own research. They also try to obfuscate the situation by quoting statistics that are irrelevant to the issues at hand."

ANALYSIS

Digital Imperialism and Emotional Tribute in East Asia

*by Jianlu Bi and Ting Zhou**

In the contemporary era of stagnant monopoly-finance capital, the maintenance of global hegemony requires more than just the physical encirclement of perceived rivals; it necessitates the systematic colonization of digital consciousness. The diplomatic friction between China and Japan in 2025—sparked by the revisionist rhetoric of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's administration and culminating in militarized standoffs that December—cannot be understood as a mere "clash of nationalisms." Instead, it must be theorized as a product of the "affective factory." Through the privatized digital infrastructures of Meta (Facebook), geopolitical crises are transformed into high-arousal goods, extracting "emotional tribute" from the masses while serving the strategic "offshore balancing" requirements of U.S. imperialism.

THE PLATFORM AS AN IMPERIAL LABORATORY

Traditional liberal media theory often views social media as a neutral "public square" occasionally plagued by "echo chambers." Such a view is historically insensible. As Dallas Smythe famously argued, the primary product of commercial media is the "audience commodity."[1] In the digital age, this commodity has been refined into predictive behavioral data.[2] On platforms like Facebook, the algorithmic architecture is structurally biased toward conflict. Content that triggers "righteous indignation," "sovereign anxiety," or "historical trauma" generates the highest engagement metrics, which in turn drive advertising revenue.

When geopolitical friction occurs in East Asia, the platform does not merely report it; it manufactures a specific type of polarization. By isolating users into algorithmically curated "opinion enclaves," the platform facilitates a process of "asymmetric affective polarization." This is not a symmetrical radicalization of two equal sides; it is a structural mechanism that captures the diverse historical-materialist frustrations of the Chinese and Japanese working classes and redirects them into horizontal, nationalist hostility.[3]

METHODOLOGY: A TWO-STAGE EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

To capture empirically the dialectical movement between digital discourse and geopolitical escalation, this study employs a two-stage longitudinal data architecture. In Stage 1 (Affective Alignment: October–November 2025), analysis focused on the initial sorting of users into opinion enclaves through aestheticized tropes, such as the New York Times's framing of Takaichi as a musician (a "heavy metal drummer") in a

Facebook post published on October 21.[4] This stage establishes a baseline of user engagement before the onset of hard military friction, revealing how platforms pre-align digital consciousness through depoliticized identity narratives.

In Stage 2 (Affective Inertia and Decoupling: December 2025–January 2026), the study tracked the digital fallout of militarized standoffs and symbolic escalations, such as the Yasukuni Shrine controversy. Utilizing a modified version of the Valence Aware Dictionary and sEntiment Reasoner (VADER) scoring algorithm, we measured "affective inertia"—the degree to which digital hostility remained hyperaroused even when material signals, such as the Japan Times report on plummeting aviation profits published on December 24, 2025, and promoted on Facebook, suggested a need for de-escalation.[5] By comparing these two stages, the methodology provides empirical proof of "Superstructural Decoupling," in which the algorithmic affective factory extracts emotional tribute by cannibalizing the material interests of the economic base.[6]

PHASE 1 ANALYSIS: THE MANUFACTURED SPARK AND THE LOGIC OF ALIGNMENT

Applying our two-stage methodology to distinguish separate phases of emotional tribute, we analyze, as an initial phase, the immediate fallout of Takaichi's remarks regarding Taiwan in November 2025, when she said any use of cross-straits force by Beijing against Taiwan would constitute a "survival-threatening situation" for Japan. Within the logic of Japanese subimperialism, such provocations serve to divert domestic attention from the contradictions of neoliberal stagnation toward an external "threat." However, once this rhetoric entered the Facebook matrix, it was subjected to the law of value.

The data from this initial phase reveals a striking divergence in affective logics across three distinct media outlets:

(1) The China Global Television Network (CGTN) Enclave: Moral Mobilization and Anticolonial Memory (Sentiment: +0.40)

In the Chinese digital sphere, the reaction was characterized by what we term "moral mobilization." The sentiment score of +0.40 does not represent simple "happiness," but rather a positive internal cohesion built upon the defense of postwar justice. For these users, the Taiwan issue is inseparable from the history of imperialist aggression. The platform, however, decontextualizes this anticolonial sentiment. It strips the historical grievance of its revolutionary potential, repackaging it as a "nationalist brand" that can be used to trigger counterreactions from other enclaves.

(2) The Japan Times Enclave: Defensive Realism as Subimperial Anxiety (Sentiment: +0.80)

The Japan Times enclave exhibited the highest positive sentiment, a phenomenon that masks a deep structural insecurity. This "defensive nationalism" weaponizes the concept of "sovereignty" to justify re-militarization. Within the Japan Times online comment section, users rallied around the Takaichi administration not out of a genuine sense of safety, but as a performative social backlash against a perceived "Communist bully." This cohesion serves the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy perfectly: it produces a digital public that is increasingly willing to accept the role of a frontline proxy for U.S. military interests, provided they feel "sovereign" in their digital expressions.

(3) The New York Times Enclave: The Managerial Gaze (Sentiment: -0.20)

The New York Times enclave represents the "managerial" wing of the imperial center. Its mildly negative sentiment reflects a cynical, pragmatic scrutiny of the conflict. Here, the friction is treated as a strategic risk to "alliance credibility" or "global supply chains." The New York Times discourse functions to other the East Asian conflict, framing

it as a primitive struggle that requires the "stable" hand of U.S. hegemony to manage it.

To understand the enclave in the age of digital capitalism is to move beyond the liberal anxieties regarding "filter bubbles" and into a critique of spatialized accumulation. In the physical world, capital requires borders and zones—Special Economic Zones, export-processing zones, and gated communities—to manage the flow of labor and value. In the digital world, the "opinion enclave" serves a parallel function. It is a privatized territory of consciousness, a digital enclosure where the platform extracts a specific type of emotional tribute, analogous to geopolitical rent.[7]

The formation of these enclaves is not an accidental glitch in the algorithm; it is a structural necessity for the preservation of U.S. digital hegemony. By locking the two largest economies of East Asia into noncommunicative silos, the digital infrastructure of Silicon Valley ensures that a unified regional front against dollar hegemony remains impossible.[8] The opinion enclave is the digital equivalent of an imperial border wall—one that is maintained not by barbed wire, but by the constant, algorithmically curated flow of affective goods.[9]

From a political-economy perspective, these enclaves represent the industrialization of the Other. For Meta, the value of a media brand user in China and one in Japan increases exponentially when they are kept in a state of mutual antagonism. Conflict drives engagement, and engagement generates the behavioral data that is the lifeblood of surveillance capitalism.[10] However, this is not merely about advertising revenue—it is about ideological enclosure. When a CGTN user is presented only with narratives of "moral mobilization" and a Japan Times user is presented only with "defensive realism," the platform is performing a labor of epistemic fragmentation.

This fragmentation serves a vital imperialist function: the prevention of horizontal class solidarity. In a rational materialist world, the working classes share common interests—stability, labor rights, and ecological survival. But within the enclave, these shared material realities are replaced by affective proxies.[11] The algorithm ensures that people using the Japanese media brand views the ones using the Chinese media brand not as a fellow laborer under the yoke of global capital, but as a "Commie bully." Conversely, the Chinese users are led to view Japanese ones not as victims of neoliberal stagnation, but as a society of "remilitarized aggressors."

Furthermore, the enclave functions as a digital tariff. By controlling the flow of information between nations, Silicon Valley acts as a gatekeeper of regional discourse. They decide which narratives are "standard-compliant" and which are "coordinated inauthentic behavior." This power allows the imperial center selectively to amplify the "defensive realism" of its proxies while suppressing or decontextualizing the "moral mobilization" of its rivals.[12] The resulting asymmetry ensures that even if the peoples of East Asia desire peace, they lack the common digital language to negotiate it. The enclave is thus the ultimate tool of "divide and rule," updated for the era of high-speed data and algorithmic governance.[13]

PHASE 2 ANALYSIS: "AFFECTIVE CONSTRAINT" AND THE INERTIA OF HATE

As the geopolitical friction transitioned going into December 2025, the conflict underwent a qualitative transformation. It moved from an acute rhetorical shock to a state of institutionalized hostility. This second phase is characterized by what we define as "affective inertia"—a phenomenon where the digital emotional momentum generated in Phase 1 becomes self-sustaining, independent of the actual shifts in diplomatic strategy or material economic conditions. In the digital laboratory of Facebook, opinion enclaves evolved into a systemic "affective constraint," effectively curtailing the maneuverability of state actors and subordinating regional stability to the logic of algorithmic outrage.

The controversy in late December surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine (which includes Class A war criminals from the Second World War in the shrine's Book of Souls) served as a primary site for the consolidation of the moral mobilization framework. The dispute was reignited by the Takaichi administration's high-profile emphasis on "sovereign tradition," which the digital public interpreted as a formal endorsement of the shrine's revisionist historical narrative. On December 22, 2025, CGTN's coverage on social media of the shrine's role in "glorifying war and distorting history" triggered a massive wave of engagement.[14] For the Chinese digital public, the shrine is not merely a religious site but a symbol of the unpunished crimes of imperialism and the fragility of postwar justice.

The comments in this enclave, exemplified by users such as Benjamin Wei, who explicitly compared the honoring of Class A war criminals to a hypothetical German shrine for Nazi SS officers, reveal how digital platforms facilitate a "reverse memory politics." Here, historical trauma is not a relic of the past but a living, digital weapon. The platform's logic successfully channeled historical grievances into a potent form of anti-imperialist mobilization, making any diplomatic compromise by the Chinese state appear as a betrayal of historical justice. This creates a ratchet effect: the emotional cost of de-escalation for the state rises with every algorithmically amplified post.

In contrast, the Japan Times enclave utilized the "radar illumination" incident of December 8, 2025, to solidify a narrative of "defensive realism."[15] The friction emerged from Tokyo's formal protest against a Chinese naval aircraft's alleged targeting of self-defense force aircraft with fire-control radar, an act the digital public swiftly reframed as a decisive breach of territorial integrity. When the Japanese government accused China of targeting fighter jets near Okinawa, the digital response was immediate and vitriolic. The discourse within this enclave weaponized the concept of sovereignty to justify further militarization, effectively acting as a populist vanguard for the Takaichi administration's security policies.

The jingoistic attacks found in many of the comments—such as Patrick D. Soh's insulting characterization of Japan as a "Chihuahua" that sounds like a "Doberman" only when backed by the United States—illustrate the profound chauvinism that characterizes such disputes.[16] These ethnocentric slurs often receive significant traction via likes and shares. They show how platform-mediated communication simplifies complex strategic encounters, reducing the issue to one of pure national animosity. This logic serves a dual purpose: it legitimizes geopolitical conflict while reinforcing, in this particular instance, the notion of Japan's role as simply a frontline proxy for U.S. Indo-Pacific interests.

THE FAILURE OF ECONOMIC RATIONALITY: THE DECOUPLING OF SENTIMENT FROM MATERIAL REALITY

In classical political economy, the "rationality" of the capitalist system is predicated on the idea that the superstructure—ideology, law, and culture—must eventually align with the requirements of the economic base. When geopolitical tensions threaten the flow of commodities and the accumulation of surplus value, the "invisible hand" of the market is supposed to compel political actors toward de-escalation. However, our Phase 2 analysis reveals a profound and terrifying decoupling. The digital superstructure, powered by the affective factory, has achieved a state of relative autonomy that now actively cannibalizes the material interests of the very bourgeoisie it was intended to serve.[17]

The report on December 24, 2025, detailing the catastrophic "dimming of profit hopes" for both Chinese and Japanese airlines, should have functioned as a "materialist shock" to the digital

enclaves.[18] In a traditional framework, the mutual loss of billions in tourism and aviation revenue would trigger a populist demand for pragmatic diplomacy. Instead, digital enclaves exhibited a total insensitivity to economic cost. Within the Japan Times and CGTN Facebook comment sections, the news of economic loss was not met with concern for labor or local economies, but it was instead weaponized to further the nationalist narrative.[19] For the Japanese digital public, the decline in Chinese tourism was framed as a necessary sacrifice for sovereign dignity; for the Chinese digital public, it was seen as a just punishment for Japanese provocation.

This decoupling represents a crisis of rationality within digital capitalism. The affective inertia generated by the algorithm has created a situation where the digital crowd is not a tool of the state, but it is a constraint upon it.[20] When Takaichi attempted to signal a tactical retreat on December 26, 2025, with her "open door" rhetoric, she was attempting to re-assert economic rationality over ideological fervor. But the affective factory does not have a reverse gear. The algorithm, having been trained to reward so-called defensive realism and moral mobilization, continued to serve up high-arousal hostility to users, effectively drowning out the signals of diplomatic compromise.

Furthermore, this phenomenon exposes the internal contradictions of the platform economy. While Meta and other digital giants profit from the engagement generated by this friction, the broader industrial and service capitals—represented here by the aviation sector—suffer the consequences of a fractured regional market.[21] We are witnessing the rise of a digital Frankenstein's monster: an ideological apparatus that has outgrown its creators' control. The affective constraint is no longer just a psychological state; it is a structural barrier to the art of the possible. In this environment, diplomacy is strangled by the very digital tools originally marketed as instruments for global connection, proving that, in the age of digital hegemony, the logic of the like is more potent than the logic of the ledger.[22]

THE THIRD EYE: THE MANAGEMENT OF IMPERIAL NARRATIVES

While CGTN and the Japan Times serve as the primary affective battlegrounds for the regional combatants, the New York Times represents the "third eye": the voice of the imperial center that manages, categorizes, and de-escalates or re-escalates narratives according to the shifting requirements of U.S. hegemony.[23] By analyzing the high-engagement data across two distinct moments, we see how the New York Times transforms raw geopolitical friction either into objects of liberal analysis or pragmatic strategic games.

Moment 1: The Aestheticization of Leadership and Initial Othering

In the first moment (October–November 2025), the New York Times enclave focused on the "novelty" of the Japanese leadership transition. The post on Takaichi as Japan's first female prime minister garnered 4,700 likes, but the discourse was primarily aestheticized, focusing on her identity as a heavy metal drummer rather than the structural implications of her hardline conservatism.[24]

This moment established a "decentered scrutiny": by framing Takaichi through the lens of Western liberal tropes (gender and subculture), the platform effectively othered the political stakes. This prevented a materialist understanding of how her appointment would inevitably lead to the manufactured part of the ensuing crisis. Even the coverage of the backlash over her 3 A.M. meetings only served to domesticate the narrative, shifting the gaze toward work culture and away from the accelerating military buildup in the East China Sea.[25]

Moment 2: Subsuming Geopolitics under Liberal Identity Politics

In the second moment (December 2025), as the regional crisis deepened, the New York Times utilized a key mechanism of imperial management: the redirection of structural conflict into individualist moralism. The highest engagement in this phase was not centered on military maneuvers, but on Finland's apology for a racist gesture directed at East Asians on December 18, 2025, which garnered 630 comments.[26]

For the Western digital public, this event provided a comfortable moral high ground. Comments in this thread demonstrate how the New York Times enclave reframes Sino-Japanese tension through universalist liberal values. By focusing on "racism" as an abstract moral failing, rather than as a component of imperialist history, the platform allows Western audiences to view the East Asian conflict as a primitive relic of nationalism.[27] This othering masks the reality that the U.S. military-industrial complex is a primary architect of regional instability.

In explicitly political threads, such as the December 12, 2025, post on the Trump administration's loosening of chip controls and silence on China-Japan tensions, the discourse shifts to a cold "imperial realism." Here the conflict is treated as a zero-sum game for U.S. capital.[28]

The sentiment reflects a cynical awareness of the "offshore balancing" strategy. Users analyzed the conflict not out of concern for regional peace, but for U.S. technological dominance. This reinforces the center-periphery dynamic: the sovereignty of Japan and the stability of China are treated merely as bargaining chips in the struggle for high-tech capital accumulation.[29]

When the New York Times covered acute tensions like the "radar illumination" incident near Okinawa, the discourse was immediately anchored to U.S. military alliances. Commenters framed the situation through the U.S.-Japan defense treaty, with remarks such as "America will protect" the agreements or cynical jabs at "Trump's loyalty" to the treaty.

This functions as a centrifuge that separates the raw, affective heat of the conflict from the "cool" strategic interests of the empire.[30] By reinterpreting friction through the contradictory lenses of liberal morality and pragmatic realism, the New York Times prevents its audience from recognizing the systemic role of U.S. capital in fueling the fire. The "third eye" seeks not to resolve the conflict, but to manage the perception of it, ensuring the Western public remains supportive of the structural status quo of U.S. hegemony.[31]

CONCLUSION: TOWARD DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY

The two-phase longitudinal analysis of the 2025 Sino-Japanese friction reveals that social media platforms are far from neutral arenas; they are affective factories that manufacture hostility to serve the structural requirements of digital capitalism. The evolution from the initial "Takaichi Provocation" to the institutionalized "affective constraint" of December 2025 demonstrates that once the algorithmically driven hate machine is set in motion, it becomes a structural barrier to rational diplomacy. In this digital era, the superstructure of manufactured sentiment has achieved terrifying autonomy, capable of overriding the material and economic interests of the regional bourgeoisie and trapping political elites in a cycle of perpetual escalation.

For the peoples of East Asia, the path to peace is inseparable from the struggle for digital sovereignty. This sovereignty must not be mistaken for "cyber-nationalism" or mere state censorship; rather, it is the radical demand for the reclamation of the digital commons from the hands of multinational capital. Breaking the shackles of digital hegemony requires more than just media literacy or fact-checking. It demands a fundamental restructuring of our digital existence—dismantling

the privatized affective laboratories of Silicon Valley that profit from the sorting of human beings into noncommunicative, polarized enclaves.

A genuine regional autonomy in East Asia can only be built upon a socialized digital infrastructure. This involves the creation of crossborder, nonprofit platforms that prioritize slow communication over high-arousal engagement and collective survival over data-mining. We must envision a "digital Silk Road" that is not a conduit for surveillance, but a shared public utility owned and governed by the workers and citizens of the region.

Only by socializing the means of feedback production can we hope to transcend the manufactured hatreds of the algorithm. The struggle for a peaceful East Asia is, at its core, a struggle for the epistemic liberation of its people. By treating digital sovereignty as a pillar of anti-imperialist resistance, the peoples of China, Japan, and the broader Asia-Pacific can begin to dissolve the artificial border walls of the digital enclave and foster a genuine dialogue based on shared material interests and a common socialist future.

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